

**FORMER FEDERAL COURTHOUSE
521 STARR STREET
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78401**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPROVEMENTS

The property is improved with the old Federal Courthouse. According to the plaque at the northwest corner of the building, the building was constructed in 1915. The architect was James A. Wetmore. The building was originally designated as the United States Customs House. However, in its many latter years of usage, the building was the Federal Courthouse. The structure has been vacant for approximately one year following the completion of the new Federal Courthouse building located approximately one-half mile northwest along Shoreline Boulevard.

The building has a gross area of approximately 29,131 square feet, with rentable area (according to the GSA) of 26,187 square feet and an occupiable area of approximately 17,945 square feet. As previously noted, the building has been vacant for approximately one year with no tenants since the U.S. District Courts and the Marshal Service vacated the premises in March 2001.

The building has an imposing exterior that exemplifies Classic Revival Architecture. It is understood that the building is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The structure has a concrete pier and beam foundation with combination brick and stucco exterior. Framing is a combination of steel and wood. The building faces to the north with three sides of the structure having a number of special appointments including decorative cast concrete, decorative wood brackets under the eaves, a clay tile mansard which extends to a flat tar and gravel built-up roof. Reportedly, most of the clay tiles and the decking for the mansard area were replaced circa 1996. The floor support system is poured in place concrete and steel.

The building has three floors and a finished basement. Central heat and air conditioning is provided to the entire structure with exception of a small area in the northerly section of the basement. A concrete wall that extends out approximately four feet from the building perimeter surrounds the basement; the wall provides ventilation for the basement area.

The building has two chillers, each being approximately 60 tons; the chillers are in operable condition; one chiller was replaced circa 1990 and the other was replaced circa 1984. The cooling tower is at the southeast corner of the site. Each floor of the building has a single air handler; the air and heat for each floor is independent of the other. The heating and air conditioning system has Johnson controls. The structure has one boiler that is in good operating order. A single water heater services the entire building. The structure is entirely sprinklered with the sprinkler risers located in the northwest quadrant of the basement; this is also the location of the water meters and fire alarm system. The building has emergency generators. The building has a security system; the alarm utilizes outside notification.

An automatic, Hunter Hays, 1,800-pound capacity elevator, serves all four floors of the building. Additionally, the building has one interior stairwell serving all four levels. A metal fire escape is located along the east side of the building.

The U.S. Marshals Service was the last occupant of the basement. The basement area has a service counter and holding cells (three). Areas of the basement have carpet and vinyl floor covering; reportedly, there is no asbestos tile in the building. The basement has one of three safes. A portion of the basement flooring is out of level, but there is no apparent wall shifting.

The first floor includes the main entry to the building off Starr Street and a rear entry off of the parking area. The main entry has airlock, plate glass doors leading to a terrazzo floor entry/lobby. The ceiling height in the entry is approximately 14 feet; this area has "period" wood trim. The northeast corner of the first floor is the location of the clerk's office which has older finish-out including carpeting, a 2'x 4' ceiling grid system, vinyl wall covering, etc. The restrooms in this area are average quality and older style. The offices at the southeast corner of the first floor are also old style and in need of refurbishing. Additionally, the offices in the northwest quadrant of the first floor are older style and have a suspended ceiling.

The majority of the interior wall system features plaster construction.

Several offices have a limited amount of sheetrock.

Restrooms on the first through third floors are located in the westerly quadrant of the building. The restrooms are adequate in size and have tile flooring and tile wainscoting. Overall, the restrooms are in average condition.

The second floor includes a library along the north wall of the central section of the first floor plus a safe. The library has extensive built-in walnut bookcases and a 2' x 4' ceiling grid system. The southeast corner of the second floor is the location of one of the judge's chambers. The finish-out in this particular chamber area is "dated" and in average condition. Finish-out includes suede type wall covering, walnut paneling and a half bath. The courtroom is located in the center of the second floor and has a 13-foot ceiling height, wood paneling and newer carpeting. The overall condition is average.

The third floor surrounds a courtroom that is approximately the same size as the courtroom on the second floor. The third floor courtroom has elevated flooring that is several steps up from the main hallway off of the elevator. The courtroom on the third floor has a 13-foot ceiling height. This area was refurbished circa 1994 with new carpeting, walnut paneling, walnut judge's bench and elevated jury box. The courtroom has newer special light fixtures (fluorescent), 2'x 4' suspended ceiling tiles with recessed grid. The overall condition of the courtroom is good. Adjoining the courtroom to the southeast is the judge's chamber that was refurbished circa 1994 with new carpeting, a three-piece bath (shower), etc. The northeast corner of the third floor is the location of the clerk's office and library that also has newer carpeting; offices with painted paneled walls, an 11-foot ceiling height, etc. A stairway to the attic is located

just east of the courtroom. The jury assembly rooms each have two, older style, two-piece restrooms that are in fair/dated condition.

The attic has a ceiling height of approximately 11 to 12 feet. Access throughout the attic is via wood walkways. An inspection of the attic indicates that the building has heavy duty wood roof decking. The elevator equipment room is located in the attic area plus the expansion tank for the cooling system. Access to the flat section of the roof is via a steep wooden stairway.

Building management reports that the mildew in the building has been eradicated and every three months the building is treated for mildew. Other environmental issues would include asbestos. Building management reports that there is no obvious asbestos, but that some asbestos is assumed in certain water lines (management expects that some or all of the asbestos in the water lines may have been removed at some point in the past).

An environmental study prepared by Loflin Environmental Services (October 16, 1966); Loflin basically indicates that any friable asbestos material is associated with pipe and tank insulation.

It appears that there has been an attempt and possible conformance to bring the building to ADA requirements. Examples include handicap ramps to enter the building, a chair/elevator system for handicap access to the courtroom areas, elevator modifications, etc. Relative to buildings of generally similar age and condition in the Corpus Christi market, the property is judged to be in conformance with ADA standards for buildings of this type. The building superintendent reports that the structure is ADA compliant overall.

Site improvements include the following:

Onsite parking has space for approximately 31 automobiles. The asphalt parking areas are generally in good condition.

Concrete retaining wall along the east side of the building and in the south-central quadrant of the site separating the two levels of parking.

Landscaping along the front of the building with a sprinkler system.

From an architectural styling standpoint, the interior of the building features less noteworthy finish-out and design than the exterior. The exterior of the building is "handsome". The classical styling of the building's exterior together with the particular construction materials may be the chief components that make the building eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The other component of the construction, which adds to the particular unique design/construction characteristics, includes the multi-pane, wood frame windows. The window units add authenticity to the lasting classical style of the structure.

In summary, the property includes a heavily constructed, handsome, four level government office/courtroom building which has been well maintained and is in above average condition relative to the age of the structure. The mechanical systems of the building are in operating order.

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

The property has been under the same ownership since January 22, 1910. The United States of America acquired the property in 1910 from I. M. Iovovich. Out of interest, the site was acquired for \$9,000 in 1910. The property has remained under continual ownership since 1910. The property is not listed for sale nor is there a contract to acquire the property. Reportedly, when the building was constructed in the early 1900's it was known as the U.S. Customs House. More recently, it has been known as the Federal Courthouse Building. The building was vacated by the United States approximately one year ago upon completion of the new Federal Courthouse Building located northeast of the property along Shoreline Boulevard.

ASSESSED VALUE AND ANNUAL TAXES

According to the Nueces Appraisal District, the property is not assessed and is exempt from ad valorem taxes.

INSURANCE

The cost of insurance for buildings like the property in Corpus Christi, Texas, ranges from a minimum of \$0.10 to \$0.12 per square foot to as high as \$0.20 per square per annum. If the property were in private ownership, insurance premiums would range from \$2,900 to \$5,800 per year (for fire and extended coverage and liability).

ZONING

Corpus Christi zoning personnel were contacted with reference to the zoning of property immediately surrounding the property. According to the City of Corpus Christi personnel, zoning which would reasonably be anticipated for the property if held under private ownership would be "B-6" (Primary Business District). Reportedly, most of the properties within a several block radius of the property have this zoning classification. "B-6" zoning allows for office development, retail development, clubs serving alcohol, hotel development, etc.